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ABSTRACT

This study examines a non-profit foster care program's ability to teach youths ages 14 to 21 independent living skills. The agency, located in the northeastern United States, near a major urban area, did not have a successful transition of its youth to a Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP), which provides young men and women the opportunity to live in pre-independent apartments, experience "the real world" while receiving supervision, counseling, and life skills training. The most significant problem for the foster care program was that it was not preparing youths for life beyond the foster care system. This problem occurred primarily because the caseworkers and administrators focused their attention on infants and toddlers in the agency's care rather than independent living skills for older youths. A program was developed that encouraged youths to be as involved in the planning and implementation process as possible. The program was a hands-on, do-it-yourself experience for the youths, with the goal of helping them enter the SILP. The program used a group format for such things as: motivational presentations, guest speakers, life skills inventory exercises, and field trips to the Department of Labor and Neighborhood Legal Services. Though the program was considered a success, there were several obstacles--the most serious of which was the lack of cooperation from the agency with the exception of the chief executive officer. Future research is recommended. A Life Skills Inventory and a Calendar Plan are appended. Contains eight references. (KW)

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Life Skills Training for Foster Care Youth

by
David Zapfel
Cohort 64

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A Practicum Report Presented to the
Master's Program in Child Care, Youth Care and Family Support
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Science

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Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

3/23/95 — David J Zaslow

Date — Signature of Student

Abstract

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Youth in foster care are not being prepared to live independently and free of the system. Upon their twenty first birthday, the youth in custodial care need to leave the system. The author designed and implemented a strategy intended to provide youth a life skills training course that would improve their readiness for independent living.

The responses of both youth and their workers were favorable. The strategy ultimately promoted the development of a life skills training class that will be incorporated into the supervised independent living program. All youth referred to the S.I.L.P. will now be put in the life skills training class so that staff can have a chance to work and assess the youths' readiness for the S.I.L.P.

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Chapter 1

This agency began in 1890, as a foundling home for babies and very young children. As needs changed, the agency evolved into the present multi-service agency to meet the needs of troubled children and their families. It is a not-for-profit, free-standing corporation located in the Northeastern United States. The agency is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children, Inc.

The multi-disciplinary professional team includes certified social workers, school counselors and psychologists, special education teachers, consulting psychiatrists, and nursing staff as well as child care workers, life skills trainers, teacher assistants, and other support staff.

The agency operates a residential campus, four satellite offices, and two preschool settings. Residential care of children centers on the agency's seventy-acre campus near a major urban area. At this site are four cottages, the school, and an administration building which houses pre-independent living apartments. Two satellite offices in nearby cities have family social workers for the residential program. Headquarters for the foster care program, supervised independent living program, and the newly established preventive respite program are in the inner city. The therapeutic preschool operates at two sites, one in the suburbs and the other a satellite in the inner city.

The residential treatment program is designed to help families whose children are experiencing moderate to severe emotional problems, and when the child as part of family treatment requires an intensive, highly structured, twenty-four-hour-a-day, multi-disciplinary treatment environment.

The agency's approach to this form of treatment is strongly focused on seeking to engage the whole family in treatment both on campus and when the child goes on home visits. Campus housing is a available for 57 children between the ages of 9 and 16 years. An apartment houses a pre-independent living program for six boys. There are four main cottages on the campus, each accommodating twelve or thirteen boys or girls (two cottages for each sex). Social work services include residential and family social workers who provide individual and family counseling. The family's participation is a basic expectation. Children participate in weekly individual counseling and regular group counseling to assist them with personal/family matters. A primary objective of the program is family reunification.

The agency's therapeutic preschool serves three-and four-year-old boys and girls who require special attention because of difficult-to-manage behavior and/or delays in the development of socio-emotional and other important skills. The goal is to prepare each child for successful entry into public school. In that effort, the school strives to enlist family understanding and involvement as a positive resource in promoting growth. The preschool offers three types of service: center-based, consultant teacher, and special class with Headstart. In addition to being a provider of specialized preschool programs, the agency is also approved by the State Education Department to serve preschool children who are classified as emotionally disturbed to

developmentally delayed.

The supervised independent living program (S.I.L.P.) gives young men and women, ages 16 to 21, the opportunity to live in apartments in the community and experience the "real world," while receiving supervision, counseling, and life skills training. The agency developed the S.I.L.P. so that young adults can develop the strength and skills for successful living. The S.I.L.P. provides financial support and independent living skills training, with special emphasis on budgeting and bill paying. The S.I.L.P. social workers provide counseling and ensure utilization of community resources.

The Day School/Treatment Program serves boys and girls, ages 5 to 21, who need a high level of structure, individual attention, and support services to help them succeed in school. The program is an alternative for students who have experienced difficulty in public school or special education settings, but who do not require residential placement. The program provides a twelve-month school calendar, a maximum of six students per class, full-time crisis aides, weekly individual counseling, group counseling, and bi-weekly family counseling.

In July of this year, the agency began the Preventive Respite Program. Trained respite providers house children and youth up to age 21. The birth parents voluntarily place their children into Respite for a period of 21 days. If the parent is going into a detoxification program for drug or alcohol use, the length of stay may be 28 days. Respite caseworkers maintain daily contact with the respite provider. After-care and support services are set up for the entire family. Recently, this program merged with the Supervised Independent Living Program to become Preventive Services, for which the author is the director.

The setting for this report was the Foster Care Program. It is located at the same site as the Preventive Service Programs that the author oversees. The Foster Care Program has homes located throughout the state. It provides a family atmosphere for displaced boys and girls. The children attend school in the local district, which is reimbursed by that home school district. Certified by the state, the agency screens, trains, and supervises those people who desire to become foster parents. The Foster Care Program cares for children on regular, special and exceptional levels of care. The program works with newborns through teenageers who are emotionally disturbed, abused, or neglected. The youth are referred by county departments of social services, family courts, and the division for youth. These children require a less structured level of care than what is provided in residential settings. The caseworkers in the foster care program provide regular counseling for the foster children and families. Foster parents are supported additionally with 24- hour back-up supervision and on-going training. The Foster Care Program is administered by a vice-president and a director who oversees seven caseworkers who go out in the field and work directly with the clients. There is a director of training who oversees an assistant trainer and the intake coordinator. The Foster Care Program also has a satellite office located in another city. It is a much smaller version of the local program. Currently, the program has 138 children in placement. Forty of this number are age 14 and older. The program's offices are centrally located in the city. The offices have been newly remodeled to include conference rooms, training equipment, and family visiting rooms. Support staff include an administrative assistants, a receptionist, and a secretary.

In July of 1994, the author became the director of Preventive Services, responsible for all facets of the Supervised Independent Living Program and the Preventive Respite Program. He currently oversees two caseworkers and two casework assistants who perform direct-line duties with the clients. The Supervised Independent Living Program has been running for the last three years. In that time the author has been able to attend a number of trainings in the field of Independent Living and has had a number of experiences implementing services for the 16 to 21-year-old age group. As mentioned before, the author's two programs are located in the same offices as the Foster Care Program, where the practicum was done.

The author was able to work cooperatively with the Foster Care Program because it could see the benefit of having a curriculum that addresses life skills training for its older teenage youth. The department knew that it needed to provide in-class training and an on-going plan that prepares their youth for life beyond the system. The author's position as director equals or is above all the positions in foster care programs, except for the vice-president. The vice-president and the two directors within the program fully supported the author's working with the foster care youth. The CEO of the agency assisted the author in locating this problem area and offered his help if anyone was not supportive of this project. The other connection between the author's position and the foster care program is that if any of the foster care youth cannot return home, they would be assessed for the author's Supervised Independent Living Program.

Chapter 2

The Foster Care Program currently has forty youth for whom, according to licensing standards, the agency must provide in-class and on-going training in the area of life skills training. There was no training or curriculum being offered to these youth, who are 14 to 21 years old. The regulations state that all youth over the age of 14 are required to receive on-going training in the areas of job readiness, educational planning, daily life skills, and self esteem (New York IL Regulations, Part 430.12 (F).)

In interviews, the vice-president of the Foster Care Program and the Director stated that they needed to develop and implement a life skills training curriculum before the state sanctioned the agency and/or held payment back for all youth until a life skills program was in place. At a recent foster care staff meeting, the caseworkers stated that they agreed with the Vice-President and Director that a life skills curriculum would greatly benefit those youth who need to learn skills that will make them more independent and less dependent on the system. The agency has not had a successful transition of the foster care youth to the Supervised Independent Living Program. The S.I.L.P. looks for youth who would not be vulnerable living in the inner city and who are employed or are currently looking for employment. The youth needs to have the ability to act in a mature, responsible way most of the time.

Foster Care youth who had been assessed by the Supervised Independent Living Program (S.I.L.P.) team have not been found, in any of the twelve cases, to be ready for the S.I.L.P. Comments on the assessments include: "Not mature enough," "no goals or initiative," and "would be too vulnerable in the community, needs more community experience." The Supervised

Independent Living Program assessed twelve foster care youth. Of the twelve, only five qualified for a second interview with the S.I.L.P. team. Of these five, none of the youth were considered ready for the program. Some youth visit the S.I.L.P. apartments and spend overnights there to help ease the transition of going from parents who are with the youth twenty four hours per day to living free of staff. The most significant problem for the Foster Care Program was that it was not preparing the youth in its care for life beyond the foster care system. This problem occurred for several reasons. The caseworkers and administrators did not see independent living as a priority for their clients. Some caseworkers thought that school is the appropriate place to learn about things such as home economics and job readiness training. For them, the independent living group, ages 14 to 21, was not as high a priority as the infants and toddlers. The foster care department continued to ignore the necessity of instructing life skills training because it had not yet been sanctioned by the state.

There was a theme that is consistent in the literature regarding the importance of instructing foster care youth in life skills. The running theme is that state agencies and other programs have looked at the "product" (i.e., clients) that they are turning out in their foster care programs. They are seeing that they did not prepare youth for living independently. In Arizona, administrators of public agencies were concerned about the rising number of youth remaining in foster care until the age of eighteen. This caused state foster care administrators to look closely at independent living preparation. Seven years later, Arizona developed a model statewide policy. It developed a realistic policy based on the experience of a pilot project called the Arizona Young Adult Program. The program is a statewide training and supportive service to help foster care

youth achieve their full potential. It provides many services, such as independent living discussions, daily living skills, health and family planning, interpersonal skills, legal rights seminars, and recreation activities. It focuses on the utilization of community services so that when youth reach the age of getting out of the system, workers are able to refer more prepared young men and women (Reilly, 1980).

The Jefferson County Department of Social Services in Denver, Colorado, wanted to emancipate fifteen youth in its care. The caseworkers were frustrated because they could not refer unprepared youth to any independent living programs or to leave the system. They thought that they needed to develop a program that would provide individualization and prepare youth for independent living. The state of Colorado introduced Senate Bill 26 that ensures independent living youth will be reviewed in court every six months. It will also make sure that youth are not being warehoused in placement (Riley, 1989).

A youth outcome study was done to look at outcomes of youth who were served by the foster care system. The average youth in the study was living on his or her own for three to five years. He had spent an average of five to six years in foster care. On average, the participants had lived in three foster homes. The youth were interviewed about their backgrounds in foster care, employment, history, and contact with both biological and foster families. The researchers found that, on the average, the youth were leaving foster care at the age of seventeen, which, to them, stressed the need for earlier preparation in independent living skills. They then encouraged the youth to stay in care longer. Their study also found in those youth who left care prior to building on life skills, educational deficits, extensive health needs, but poor access to health

services, difficulties in getting/keeping housing, criminal activity high, substance use and abuse common, high levels of depression, and a strong need for independent living skills training. (Reilly, 1980)

In Massachusetts, Judge Baker Children's Center: Building Partnerships estimates that 50% of its foster care clients are adolescents. The Center experienced a lack of ability to transition youth to independent living services. The issue became critical for the Center as it thought it was making hit-or-miss attempts to help adolescents acquire the skills, savvy, and sense of self that they would need to survive in the community (Jacobs & Nelson, 1985).

The other major theme in the literature was the issue of decreasing dependency of youth on the foster care system. In Nashville, Tennessee, the Oasis Center created an independent living program that teaches tangible skills with an intent to show youth the harsh realities of the world. They instruct in daily living skills, job preparation, transportation, and money management (Steppe & Hughes, 1985).

In Cincinnati, Ohio, the New Life Youth Services trains and prepares youth to live in their own apartments, with the intent of curbing homelessness. The youth try to decrease dependency by getting themselves up in the morning and get a feel for what it is like to be alone and experience more freedom, but also bear more responsibilities (Mecum & Sepate, 1989).
The journal Daily Living posed the question, Why have independent living programs? The journal makes a point by saying that past training has tended not to focus on skills and decrease youth dependency on the system. The journal contends that private and public child caring agencies

need to make fundamental changes. Programs need to be multi-level programs and to allow for flexibility in programming, and need more support from the community. The article contends that the role of the foster care caseworker will need to shift from clinician to a technical consultant or teacher who adapts or develops the resources necessary for independent living and who provides training and assistance to the adolescent foster care child. Independent living technical trainers saw the many benefits to the foster care youth. It developed a healthy sense of self, provided knowledge of available options in the workplace, trained in educational/vocational/job/careers, provided job readiness training, designed necessary documentation, developed decision making/communication, and lessened dependency for the youth on the system.
The benefits to the public or private agency were that there were better additional resources, partnerships with community resources, and preparation of youth in a variety of independent life skills trainings (Riley, 1989).

Based on the author's literature search, there seemed to be a definite need throughout the country to strengthen the life skills of youth in foster care so that they become more prepared for living free of the system. There are innovative programs being implemented. The author took a cross section of other programs' curricula. What was clear was that life skills training cannot just be sitting in a classroom and lecturing, rather it must be consist of youth going out into the community and learning skills like job readiness training, and learn how to use theses community resources. The author used a strategy that consisted of having the youth be as involved in the planning and implementation process as possible. The author wanted the youth to know that they were part of the process, and not just the students. The author hoped to motivate the youth, and

teach the process of planning and decision making. The author obtained the input from the youth from the very beginning. The author asked for ideas and what the youth thought was needed before the life skills classes even began. The strategy was not to just say there are resources out there, but to go to those resources. The skills training class was a hands-on, do-it-yourself experience for the youth. The author thought that the youth would learn and retain their new knowledge if they experienced life skills rather than just learn about them.

Chapter 3

The strategy the author used is from Judge Baker Children's Center: Building Partnerships by Marc Jacobs and Alice Nelson. They created a program called Job Opportunities for Youth Project (JOY). Besides a job readiness training, the plan calls for a life skills program that included many of the areas that the youth who participated in this author's Life Skills Program needed to make the transition to the Supervised Independent Living Program. The author adapted some of the aspects of the JOY project. The author included other training resources into the life skills sessions. Jacobs and Nelson (1985) saw their agency attempt to help adolescents acquire necessary skills, but not on a consistent basis. What they saw lacking in their clientele directly relates to key indicators on SILP's life skills inventory. These are the savvy and the sense of self and the world the youth will need to survive on their own in the community. They relied on a cooperation among agencies, which is what the author needed so that future SILP clients from different agencies could participate in the Life Skills Training Program. JOY was based on Judge Baker Center's strong conviction that satisfying a youth's employment and self-esteem is crucial for permanency planning with foster children.

To begin to implement the strategy, the author initially selected those youth who would participate in the life skills training program. The author met with each participant separately to discuss the Life Skills Program to find out what the youth's goals and needs were. The participants needed to be seeking admission to the Supervised Independent Living Program. At this initial meeting, each youth was given the Life Skills Inventory as a pretest to assist the author in measuring the ability of the participants. The participants also completed the Life Skills Life

Inventory following the Life Skills Program, as a post-test, to assist the author in measuring the effectiveness of the Life Skills Program. After all the youth met with the author and completed the pre-test, the first group session was scheduled. The life skills sessions was scheduled after school one day per week. Participants were expected to attend all five weeks of the program. The youth ranged in age from 16 to18 years old. It was expected that 20 youths would participate. Supervised Independent Living staff was present for most sessions so that they could get to know the participants who might one day be their clients. The author expected participation from the youth because all of the selected youth wanted to come into the Supervised Independent Living Program in the future.

Out of the twenty youth who were identified by the author as likely participants in the life skills training, a total of 15 youths attended the initial group sessions. The author began the session by leading a general discussion regarding what the agenda for this session was and which issues the youths thought would be helpful to learn to assist them in becoming more independent. The youth replied that they would like to hear about the supervised independent living program, go to the apartments themselves, and talk to current residents in the program. The program was described in detail, and questions were answered. The author discussed the employment section of the program last, as a springboard to begin a life skills session around job readiness training. General questions were posed to the youth. Of the fifteen youth, three elaborated on what it took to find employment, particularly the steps they needed to go through before being employed. The author asked the youth two questions. Why is it important to work? Why do you want to work? The youth responded to these questions. By asking these questions, the author was trying to

assess the motivation of the group as it pertains to being employed. The three youth who were currently employed were motivated to find what they thought would be more stable employment and at a higher hourly wage.

Sample job applications were passed out to the group. The youth filled these out to the best of their ability, but stumbled when the application asked open ended questions,such as, "Why are you seeking employment?" Appropriate answers were discussed. The next step in the process of seeking employment is the interview, which was the main focus that the author wanted to stress as being an important factor to employment. Using a flip chart, the author listed some important factors to interviewing. They were: What am I wearing? Was I on time for the interview? Did I answer more than yes or no? Was I truthful about the number of hours that I can work? Would I hire me? Each question on the flip chart elicited discussion about the importance of presenting yourself in the best possible way.

The author then put up another flip chart which had commonly asked questions. They were: What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? What experience do you have? Are you dependable?

These questions were taken from the author's experience of working with clients in the SILP. Discussion ensued around appropriate and inappropriate ways to answer these questions. Input was given from youth in the group. The youth were paired off. In each pair was an interviewer and an applicant. Using the questions on the flip chart, the interviewer asked the applicant in a mock interview. Upon completion, the youth would switch places and reverse roles.

The group was brought back together to discuss what their thoughts and feelings were being the employer, and then gave the youth homework for the next week. The homework was to experience two interviews if possible and write down what they thought they did well and what they thought they could have answered better.

All of the fifteen youth came back for the second week. Of these fifteen, ten stated they were able to do the homework from last week. The five who did not, live in a remote area where they reside in a group home. The author opened up a discussion around experiences of the youth who were able to go on the interviews. The discussion then led to what the next step should be. The flip chart was used to write down ideas the youths had. They included phone calls back to the employer, and going back to the store and following up on the status of their application.

Due to scheduling problems, a guest speaker from an AODA agency needed to speak to the group in this session instead of later in the life skills training classes. He spoke on issues regarding self-esteem, relationships, teenage pregnancy, and HIV. He is a well known motivational and informational speaker in the metropolitan area. He was chosen due to his work with current SILP youth. The youth asked the speaker many questions. The speaker provided the class with a break from the instructional training.

The author opened the budgeting/banking session by asking the participants who had a bank account. Nine of the fifteen youth stated that they have current savings accounts. A discussion was opened as to why those youth have accounts. The importance of saving money for the time when the youth are out of the system was discussed. The remaining six youth were encouraged to open accounts.

Two separate budgeting tools were used. The first budget sheet was similar to the one the author uses for clients in the SILP. This budget sheet accounts for the youth being provided rent, utilities, and fifty dollars of grocery money per week. The author wanted to show the life skills participants the advantage of staying in the social services system, and possibly coming into the SILP. It was stressed that by taking advantage of the SILP being able to pay rent, utilities, and food, the youths can save their pay, bank it, and the leave the system when they are twenty one years old, with enough funds to find a suitable place to live. The budget includes spending money, gift buying, and miscellaneous items. When this budget was done, the author presented another budget sheet to the youths. This time the youths were instructed to construct a budget without being in the SILP. The youth needed to account for rent, utilities, and food expenses. Each youth was given a thirty-hour job making minimum wage at $4.25 per hour. This would enable the youth to gross $127.50 per week. The youth multiplied this amount by four to get their monthly income to budget. For the purpose of this exercise, the author did not take into account taxes and net income. The participants had $510 to work with. The youth very quickly saw the $510 allocated to bills and living expenses.

Monetary items that the youth did not think of were presented, for example, costs to turn on utilities, start-up kitchen expenses, and food costs including cleaning supplies. The goal of having the youth see that being in the system now can benefit them later in life was achieved, based on the youths' feedback.

The interviewing section of the life skills training class was revisited. On a flip chart, the author wrote down the youths' answers to the question, What are some tips for people going out

to interview? When one of the youth answered, "Be careful about what you are wearing," the author brought in a full-length mirror to the room. Each youth was instructed to stand in front of the mirror and either to himself or to the group explain why or why not what he was currently wearing was appropriate for a job interview. The author wanted to hear the youths tell each other what was appropriate clothing for interviewing. Other responses to the original question of tips for interviewees to remember included being prompt, giving appropriate answers to employer questions, and, according to many of the youth, what not to say to employers. The youth reminded each other not to dwell on their lack of experience, but rather to stress what quick learners they were. The director of personnel of the author's agency came to the session to offer helpful hints when interviewing. As director, she is responsible for all interviewing of external candidates for positions at the author's agency. She gave a listing of "dos" and "don'ts" when interviewing. After her talk, she took each youth separately to another room for a mock interview. When all of the youth had done this, she presented strengths and weaknesses she saw that the group had. The youths then pretended that they were the employer and saw a young adult walk into their store to ask for a job The author raised the question to the group, what would be your expectations as the employer for this youth. Their answers were listed on a flip chart. The group came up with several good answers, such as being prompt, having the job take priority over extra school activities, dressing appropriately, and not talking to friends while on the job. The youth then watched the video entitled "Take This Job and Keep It." This video instructs youth in not only attaining a position but also taking steps to keeping the job.

For the third session, the author took the group on a field trip to some of the resources

that will be most helpful when the youth are either in the SILP or on their own. The first location was the New York State Department of Labor. At the labor department the youths took a half-hour tour and completed a questionnaire to find our their interests and competencies as they pertain to the job market. Once the form was completed, the youths' names and information were put on the computer system that links available employment positions with the candidates. The department then mails out a card to the youth stating that there has been a possible match. By becoming a part of the system, all of the participants can then visit the labor department, punching in a job occupation and see a listing of the most current job openings. Within the labor department are divisions of the programs that will be of use to all young adults starting on their own. The Access Center, located in the Labor Department building, assists all young adults in job training, parenting, and continuing education. The center has linked with the local community college to aid at-risk youth to succeed in school and/or prepare for a career. The author chose this community resource not only for its expertise in job readiness training, but due to its location in the heart of the city, surrounded by other resources that will be beneficial. If the youths grow comfortable going to the Labor Department, then they could branch out to other available resources.

The second resource the group visited was the Neighborhood Legal Services. This agency serves people in the community who are on public assistance and not able to afford an attorney. They specialize in landlord-tenant disagreements and civil cases. The author chose this because the clientele with whom the service works could very well be the participants in the group. The author wanted the youths to see the service that will help them, if they need legal help.

The author finished this session by telling the group to go to three resources in the community and bring back pamphlets and/or information for the entire group.

For the next group meeting, the two sessions were held at the SILP apartments. Following a tour of the apartments, the group began the session by asking all of the participants to go around the table and share information resources that they visited. All of the youth had at least one pamphlet to share. The remainder of the session was given to a great speaker from Western New York AIDS Community Services for a general presentation on the HIV virus, ARC complex, and the AIDS disease. The youths asked questions of the presenter. For the apartment management life skills session, the group went into the kitchen to discuss food preparation. With the assistance of the SILP staff, the group broke into three sub-groups. Each sub-group prepared a part of the meal that the group shared upon completion of that week's training. One sub-group made a salad; another subgroup prepared a dessert; and the third sub-group made the main course. One spokesperson was elected per sub-group to speak for the entire group to instruct them in how that part of the meal was prepared. Nutrition and shopping tips were stressed. Each sub-group was also responsible for clearing up whatever mess they made. Hygiene, washing hands, and consumer awareness were stressed and pointed out to the group.

The time management session began with the author asking the question, "What do you do in the course of a week?" "If this apartment were yours, what would you need to do to keep it up?" As the participants yelled out ideas, the ideas went up on a flip chart. When the participants ran out of ideas, each one received a sheet of paper on which was a weekly calendar. At the top were the seven days of the week. The youths were then instructed to fill in a week of all the

activities, jobs, school, fun activities, and homework that they do. Then youth were told to add all of the things they will need to do to manage an apartment. They were instructed to add all of the things on the flip chart, such as laundry, clean an apartment, and so on. The common misconception was the length of time the youth perceived it took to do laundry at a laundromat or to do a thorough cleaning of a home. They minimized the time for cleaning and work hours, and maximized time for recreational activities. The author was trying to present a picture of all of the responsibilities to become independent.

A guest speaker came from the local community college, the coordinator of the college independent living/paid internship program. The program focuses on foster care youth who are in the college. These youth are at high risk of dropout due to the lack of supports in place for them. One half of the current SILPs youth are involved in this program. The program offers paid internship in the field of the youths' choice. They are given a mentor who supervises them during work hours. The job is worked around the youths' school hours and is flexible regarding number of hours the youths need to work in a week. Each internship is tailored to the clients' specific needs. Counseling and transportation are provided by the program. After the presentation, a general discussion of pursuing educational goals ensued.

In this session the author attempted to review the sessions and end the life skills training on a positive note. The author reviewed the community resources section and asked the group to review the job readiness section, including interviewing and keeping a job. All of the participants then took the life skills inventory as a post-test.

Chapter 4

The goal of the project was to assist adolescent youth in the transition to the Supervised Independent living Program through the use of a competency-based, goal-oriented life skills curriculum. The author thinks that the goal was achieved. The majority of the youth did improve their Life Skill abilities from pre-test to post test with the intervention of the curriculum.

Outcome Objectives:

1. By the end of the training, 80% of participants who completed the life skills training will exhibit a 20% increase in their individual scores, as measured by a comparison of the life skills inventory which is the pretest and post test.

The overall total score improvement by 20% would tell the author that the intervention of the life skills training was effective. The curriculum met the needs the Supervised Independent Living Program to better prepare those youth who have been identified.

2. By the end of the life skills training, 50% of the participants who complete the training will exhibit a 10% improvement in the categories of Interpersonal Skills and Community Involvement/Knowledge of Resources as measured by a comparison of the life skills inventory which is the pretest and the postest

A 10% improvement in the categories of Interpersonal Skills and Community involvement/Knowledge of Resources would show that the life skills training was effective. These areas are of particular importance to the S.I.L.P. due to the nature of the program and the importance of their community awareness.

All of the youth completed the Life Skills Inventory before the training and upon completion. As Figure 1 shows regarding the scoring of the pretest, ten youth scored in the intermediate range, five youth scored in the adequate range, and zero youth scored in the exceptional range.

Figure 2 indicates a 73% increase in the scoring on the post test. Eight youth went from the intermediate to the adequate range. Three youth increased their scoring by going from the adequate range to the exceptional range.

The 73% percent increase was less than the 80% percent increase the author had proposed that the life skills class would effect. The author accounts for this in two ways. There was no way to judge how low the youths life skills were before making an estimate as to how much of an increase the life skills class would affect the results of the post-test. The author misjudged the youths' wide variety of reading levels. The inventory requires extensive reading, and some of the youth were not able to stay focused throughout the entire pretest and post-test. The youth seemed to lose interest in really thinking about the questions before answering. In future sessions the author would try to assess reading capabilities before beginning the life skills inventory test. A suggestion would be for staff to read the test aloud to the youth.

Figure 1

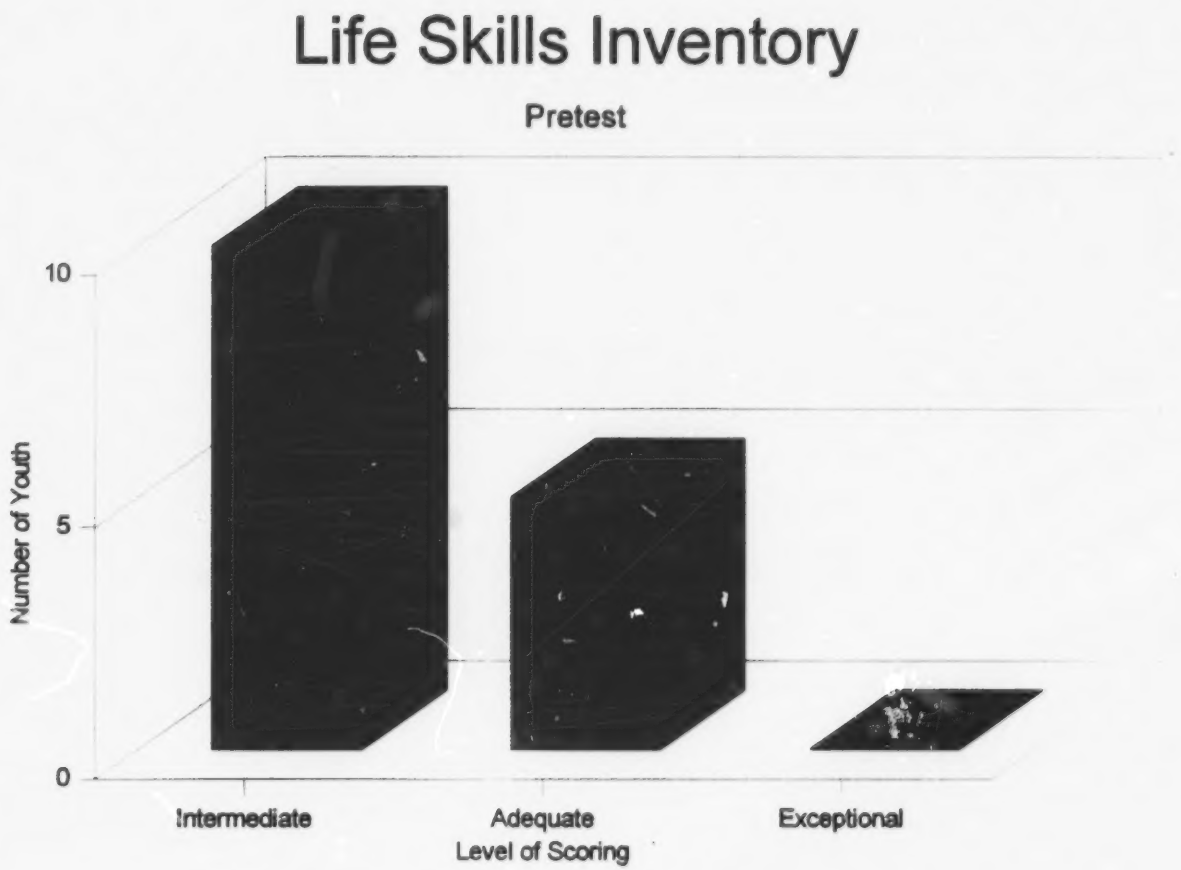

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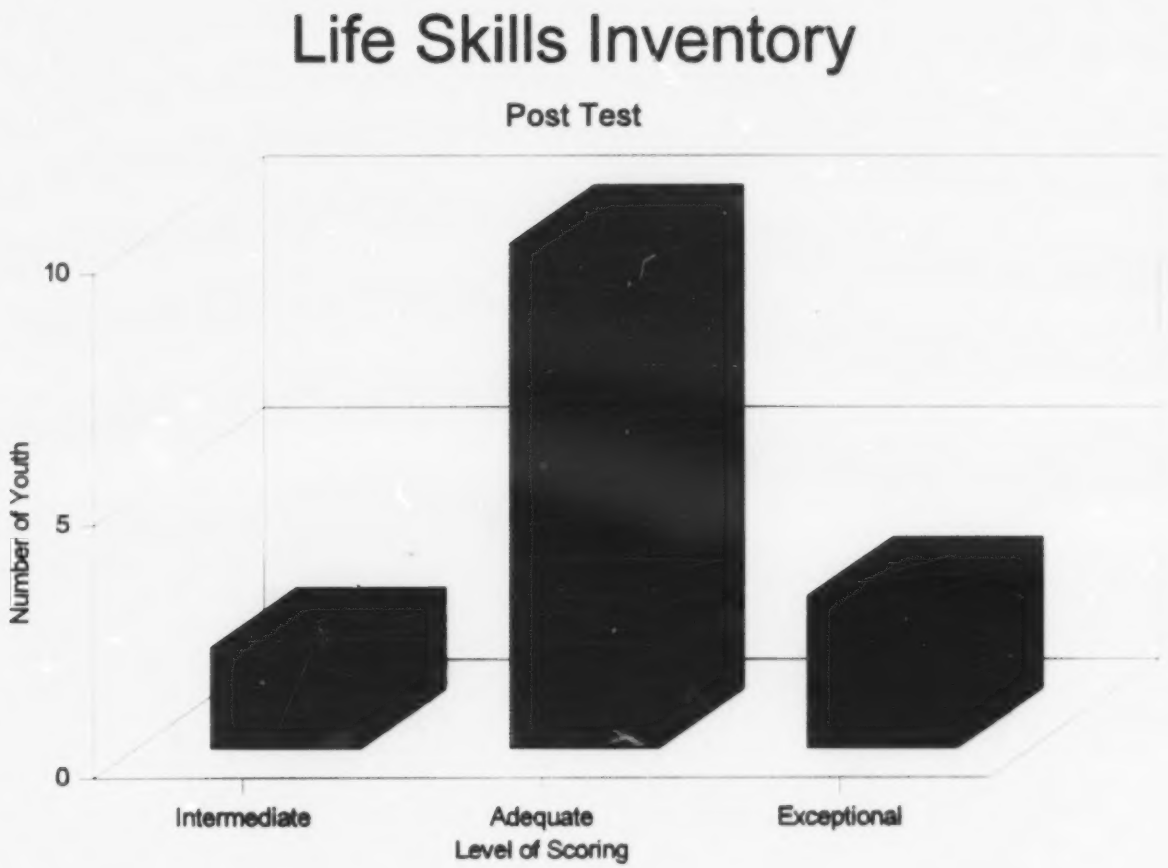
Figure 2


Life Skills Inventory
Post Test
10
5
0
Number of Youth
Intermediate
Adequate
Level of Scoring
Exceptional

As figures three and four show the critical indicator category of knowledge of community resources increased 55% from pretest to post-test. The author had expected an increase of only 10%. The author thinks the greater-than-expected increase in this category is due to the intensive training that the life skills training class provided. The participants gained firsthand experience by visiting the employment and legal resources in their community, which was directly reflected on questions on the life skills inventory.

Two participants in the group went from the intermediate to adequate range, and six participants went from the adequate to exceptional range from the pretest to post-test scoring on the life skills inventory.

Figure 3

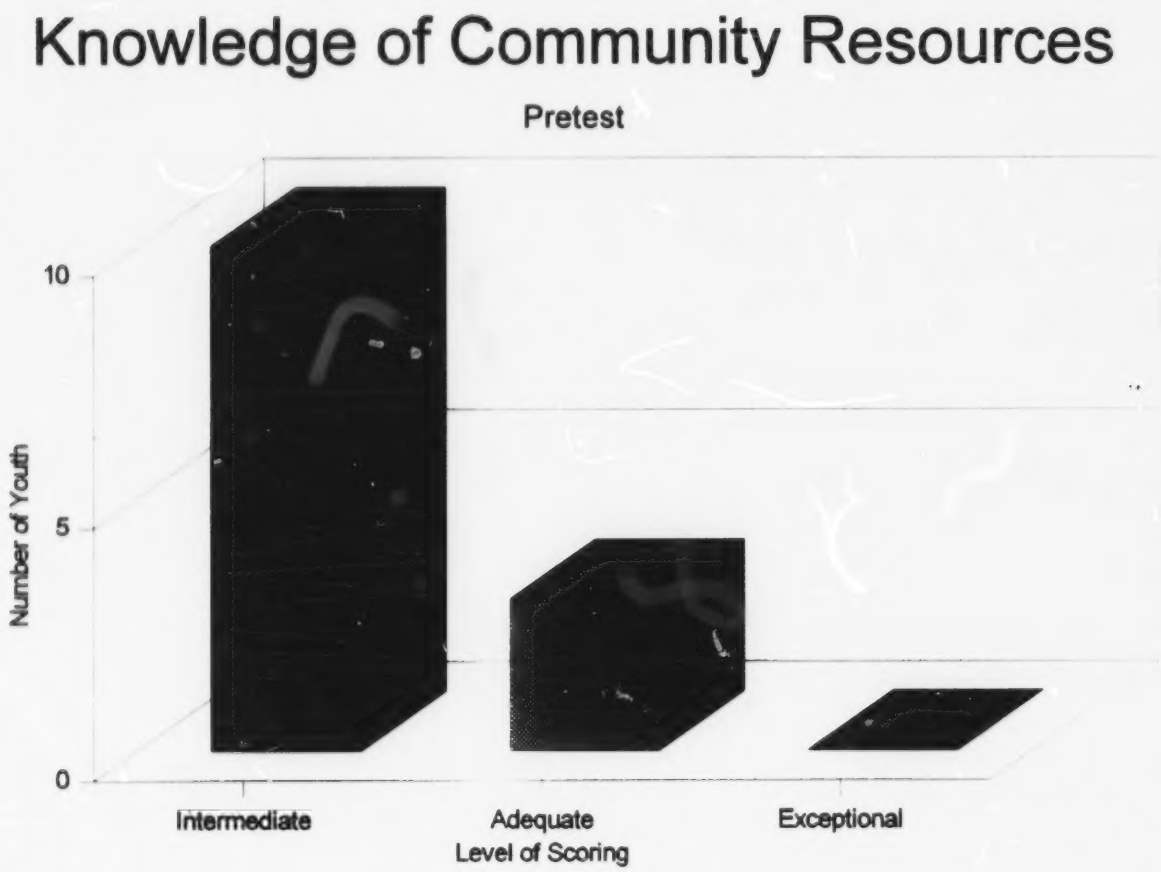


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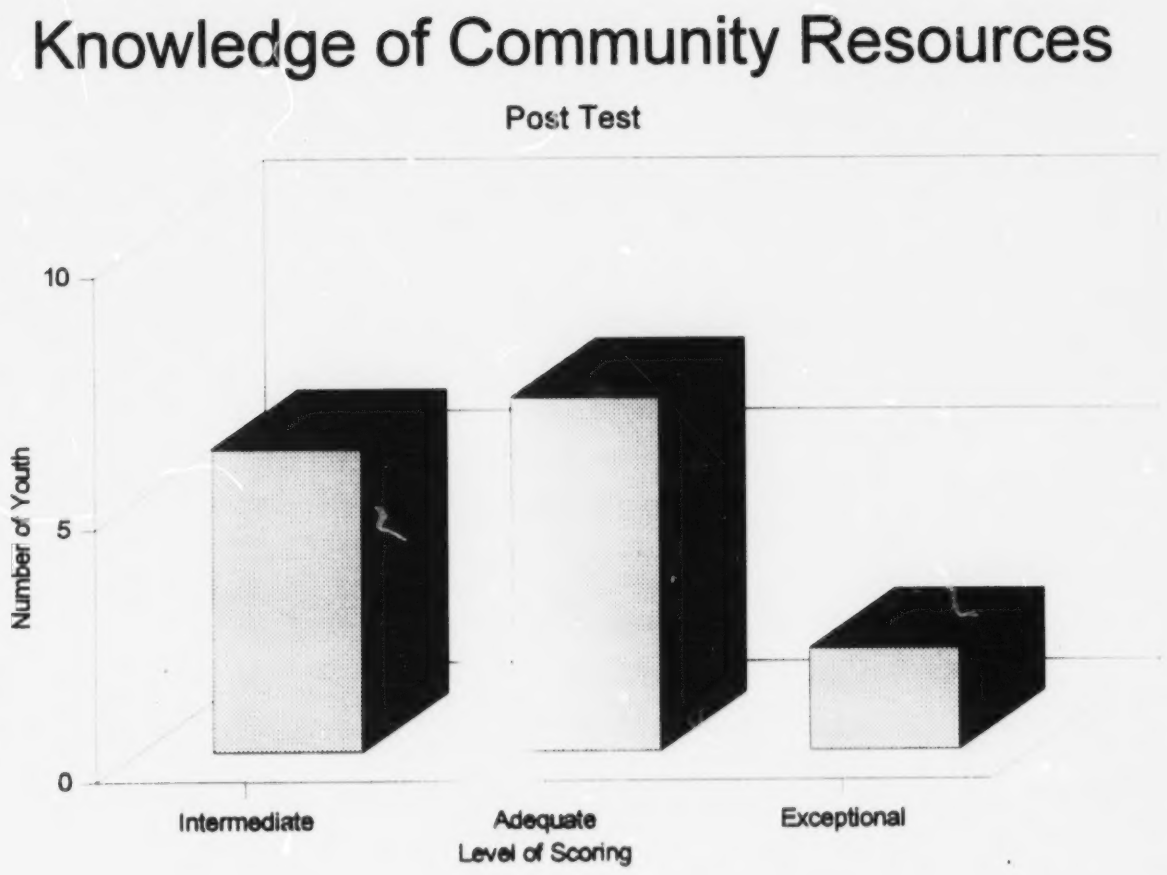
Figure 4



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As the figures five and six show in the critical indicator category of interpersonal skills there was a 25% increase from pretest to post-test. Two of the youths' scores went from the intermediate range to the adequate range, and two of the participants' scores went from the adequate range to the exceptional range. The author is ascribing this increase to the life skills training class where the youths experienced training in self-esteem, relationships, and other life skills.

Figure 5

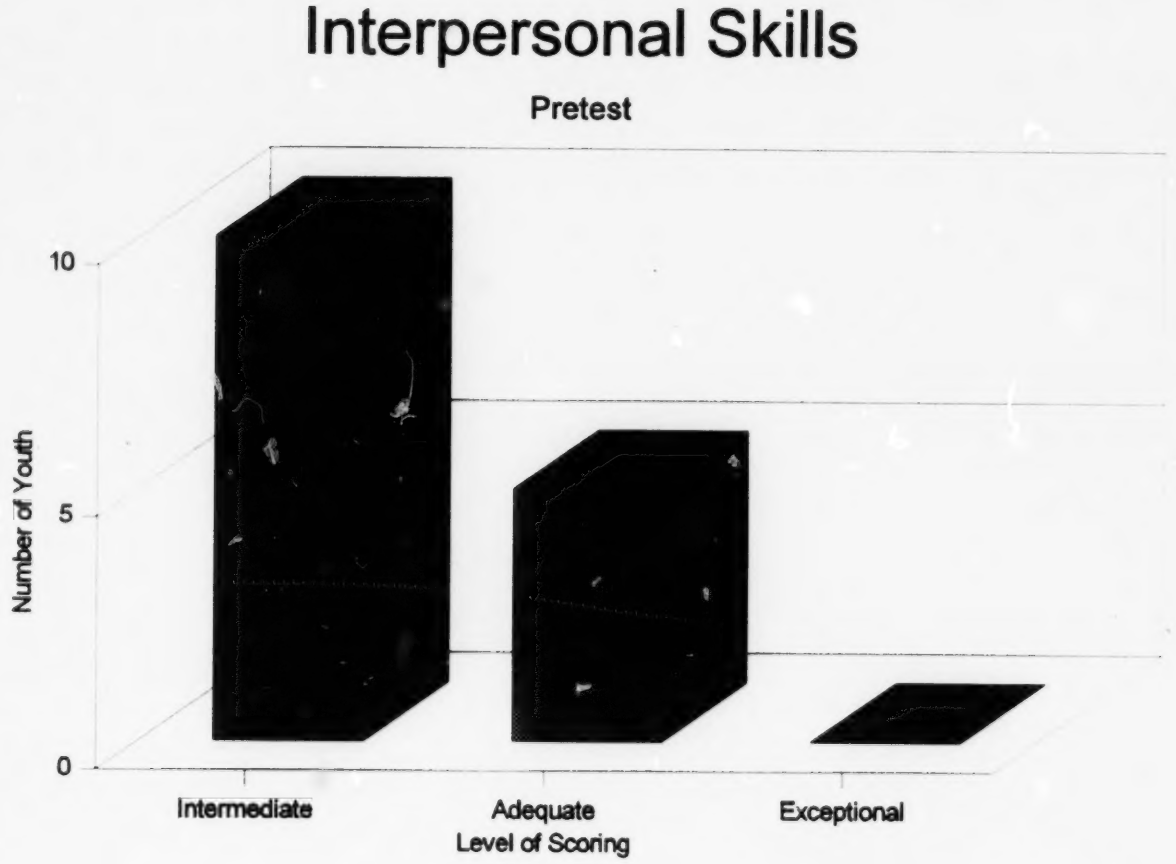

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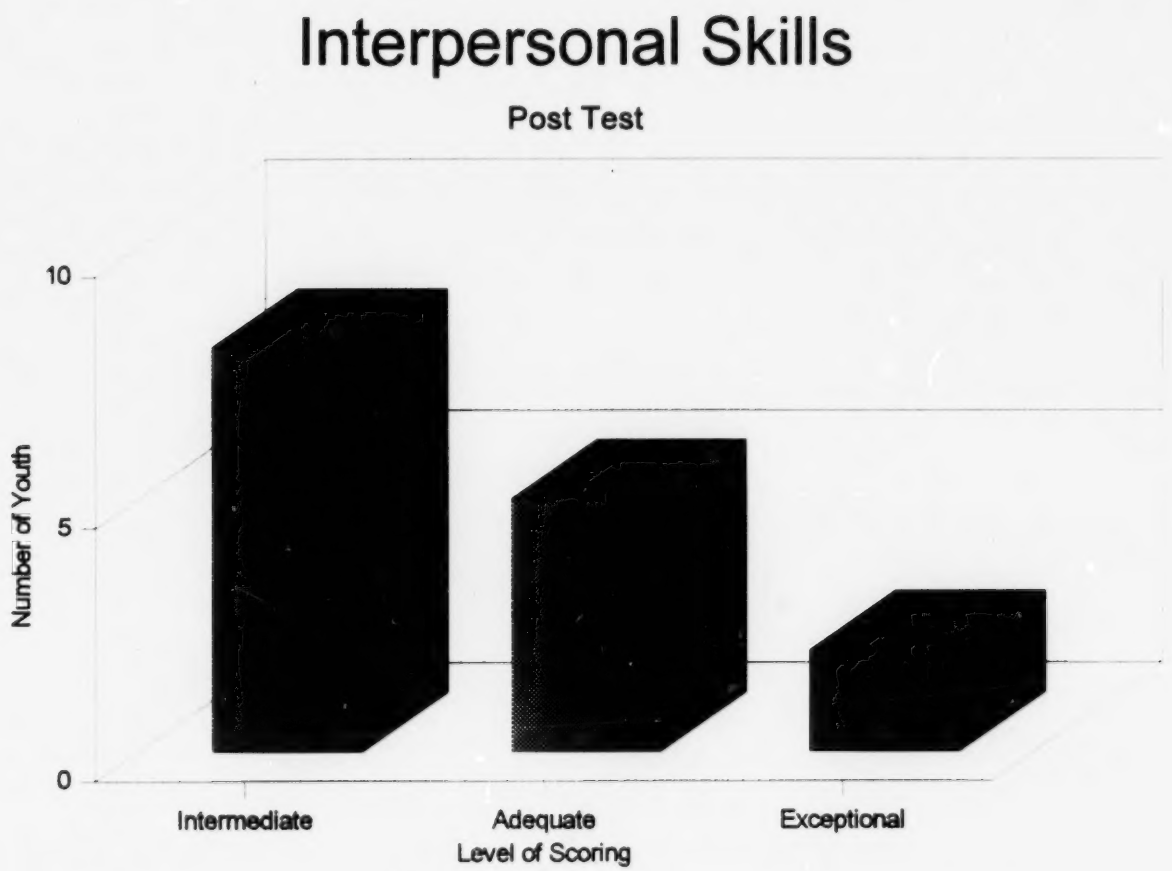
Figure 6



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When the records of those youth referred to the supervised independent living program were analyzed, all youth completed the life skills inventory. Two critical indicator categories are interpersonal skills and community involvement/knowledge of resources. The SILP team needed to see high scores in both categories before it would recommend a youth to be admitted to the program. The interpersonal skills category is important because it focuses on feelings and the youth's ability to be able to recognize and express these appropriately. This category also centers on the youth's ability to make social arrangements and have appropriate relationships outside of the program.

The category of community involvement and knowledge of community resources is a critical indicator because it tests the youth's knowledge of basic "street smart" kinds of issues. The SILP team needs to see signs of maturity and an ability of the youth to not need intensive supervision. The SILP is the lowest level of care in New York State. The program needs to ensure the safety of all SILP youth and the program itself. It cannot place youth who may be vulnerable in the community or cause the community harm.

Chapter 5

The workers who referred the youth who participated in the program were surprised that all of the youth attended every weekly session. The author thinks that having a goal of becoming a part of the actual SILP was an excellent motivating factor to having the participants come back week after week. The author found extensive support for the program both from within the author's agency and from external referral sources. The youth were not motivated from the beginning to give up one of their after-school afternoons per week for five weeks. Workers who referred their clients agreed, in an effort to stress the importance of the program, to hold off giving the participants their monthly check of $30 from the state. This independent living stipend is given to foster care youth who are sixteen and older. The stipend is intended to be for only those youth who participate in some type of independent living program, but it has not been followed through very well mainly because there has not been a life skills class for youth to attend. Within the author's agency, the support of SILP staff, the author's peers, and supervisors has been invaluable. The author's advice is to acquire supervisor support early in the project so that funding, if needed, is approved. The only funding the author found was needed was to provide refreshments for a few of the meetings.

The author would have done a few of the "get-to-know-each-other" exercises that are popular at training. Instead, the author had the youth do the life skills inventory to begin with. The inventory is lengthy. The author did not take into account the different reading abilities of the participants. The inventory took from fifteen to forty minutes for the youth. Those who finished early had to wait up to twenty-five minutes for others to be done. The author would recommend getting the group up and out of their seats right away.

The category of job readiness training is a varied one. The author found a wide variety of youth who were ready to be employed. The author would still put all of the youth together. Because all of the youths will soon turn twenty-one years old. It will not matter if they are ready; they will leave the system when they reach their twenty-first birthday. The author thinks it would not benefit any youth to be sub-grouped with less prepared young adults.

The best luck the author had was that the AODA guest speaker had to come to the second meeting instead of the scheduled fourth week. After the youths had spent the first session sitting for the two hours, the speaker came in and had the youth out of their chairs participating and asking questions. His motivational presentation bonded the group together and allowed participants to take risks and ask questions.

In week three, the author brought in the Director of Personnel for the agency. This worked well because the youth could actually meet and hear what is important from someone who interviews for a living. The author thought that the youth benefitted from being interviewed by a professional person, as it added an importance for the youth.

Taking the field trips to the Department of Labor and to the Neighborhood Legal Services was very effective. The youths were thrilled to get up and out of the room. People in the community all supported the idea of preparing youth in the system to be better prepared for living independently. The SILP always stresses that youth need a support group and not just the staff. By going to all of these "supports," the participants saw this in action.

In week four, the author was not sure how the youth would take to an AIDS presentation. The author put this in due to two things. The first, according to the latest AIDS statistics, is that

the highest rate of AIDS death is in people in their late twenties. The incubation period is ten years for the HIV virus before turning to full-blown AIDS. This would mean that the fastest rate of infection are youth who are 17 to 20 years old. The other reason was that even though the participants get AIDS training in schools and other places, the author thinks the youth could never have too much information on this deadly disease. (WNY AIDS Community Services).

Having a SILP apartment was critical to effectively train apartment and time management. It provided another chance for the youth not to have to sit and listen rather get up and participate in the training. The author elicited the youths' answers when possible. The presentations went easier and flowed more smoothly when the youth came up with the answers instead of being lectured to.

The last session provided a nice celebration because one of the participants was soon to be admitted to SILP. It showed all of the other youths that their goal of getting into the SILP was attainable. The wrap-up session was useful because it showed all of the youth what they had accomplished and that they could be proud of themselves.

There were obstacles to this training. The idea was not popular with peers. As the author stated previously, independent living was not a priority within and outside of the author's agency. The key person who assisted the author was the CEO of the agency. He legitimized the training by saying it was "a necessary and useful tool not only to assist the SILP, but also to help youth in an age range that has few services available, and even fewer people to help them." Because the CEO stated it would happen with cooperation from other divisions, the vice-presidents from those divisions were quick to offer their support. One of the biggest obstacles was to get workers from

other agencies not only to refer their clients to the life skills class, but also to hold back their independent living stipends unless the youth participated in the program. Once again, having connections with people who have power in agencies or at the county agency helped the author work with the caseworkers. The author also went out to group homes and foster homes to do an initial "selling job" on the idea of a life skills program. The program has received a lot of attention. The life skills class will continue with the same participants as a way for SILP staff to assess the youth, and for a way to keep them involved and goal-oriented. New groups are already forming.

The author has been asked to present this training at two training in cities in the northern area of the state. Comments have centered on the fact that this life skills program helps to close the gap between group and foster home situations and the SILP. A CEO at another agency stated that "in a time when every agency wants to find a continuum of service secrets the program in another hole that has been filled."

There are two recommendations for future research. First, there could be longitudinal research, evaluating the effectiveness of the program in helping youths require employment. Second, such research could also evaluate job retention rates.

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APPENDIX A

LIFE SKILLS INVENTORY

LIFE SKILLS INVENTORY

INSTRUCTIONS

The following checklist lists specific life skills which are required for independent life in the community. Place check marks beside all the skills the youth has mastered.

A youth is designated as having a certain level of skill only when all skills at that level have been mastered.

A youth's skills for a particular category remains "minimal" until he/she has received checks for all skills under the headings Minimal and Intermediate.

A youth's skills are "intermediate" when he/she has mastered all Minimal and Intermediate skills.

A youth's skills are "adequate" when he/she has mastered all Minimal, Intermediate and Adequate skills.

However, a youth's skills are "exceptional" if he/she receives a check on any skill under the exceptional heading and if all Minimal, Intermediate and Adequate skills have been mastered.

After the youth's skills have been inventoried, rate the youth's skills in each category as "minimal", "intermediate", "adequate" or "exceptional" and enter this rating in the appropriate box on the Life Skills Inventory Scoring Sheet.

* * *

If you are not sure if the youth possesses the skill, test him/her. You might, for example, play the role of a prospective employer or landlord to test the youth's ability to handle an employment interview or rental interview. You might ask the youth to fill out an employment interview. In some cases, you might arrange an actual test; you might, for example, send the youth out to make a purchase or involve him/her in dinner preparation. The best way to use this inventory is to use your imagination and work it into daily activities over a period of several weeks.

In checking off skills, use your own judgement based on observation and discussion with the youth. If possible, fill in the form with him/her, using the process to teach the youth some of the skills he/she has not mastered.

LIFE SKILLS INVENTORY SCORING SHEET

Name of Client: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Date form was completed: _____

Person(s) completing the form: _____

_____

_____

_____

Category	Level Attained			
	Min	Int	Adq	Except
Money Management/Consumer Awareness				
Food Management				
Personal Appearance, Health & Hygiene				
Housekeeping and Personal Belongings				
Housing				
Transportation				
Educational Planning				
Job Seeking Skills				
Emergency Skills				
Responsible Drug Use				
Sexuality				
Interpersonal Skills				
Community Involvement/Knowledge of Resources				
Legal Issues				

CATEGORY: MONEY MANAGEMENT AND CONSUMER AWARENESS

Minimal

_____ 1. Knows values of coins and currency.

_____ 2. Can make a transaction at a local store and count change.

_____ 3. Has a rough idea of the value of money. (Knows approximate minimum wage, average weekly salary, cost of a car, etc.)

_____ 4. Can budget allowance to last for a week. (Shows some understanding of the concept of "savings".)

_____ 5. Has rough understanding of the difference between "luxuries" and "necessities" in food, transportation, clothing, housing, etc.

_____ 6. Understands the difference between "sale prices" and "regular price".

Intermediate

_____ 7. Can open a checking or savings account.

_____ 8. Can write checks and make deposits.

Adequate

_____ 9. With assistance can make out a monthly budget covering regular expenses.

_____ 10. Shows some "sales resistance" to "something for nothing" advertising and "low weekly payment" credit plans.

Exceptional

_____ 11. Budgets for unanticipated emergencies, seasonal bills, etc.

_____ 12. Records checking transactions.

_____ 13. Understands buying on credit, loans, interest and late payment penalties.

_____ 14. Understands payroll deductions, taxes, FICA, insurance.

_____ 15. Understands what a good credit rating is.

_____ 16. Can complete a short tax form.

_____ 17. Shops around to find bargains, uses coupons.

CATEGORY: FOOD MANAGEMENT

Minimal

_____ 1. Can order in a cafeteria or a fast food restaurant.

_____ 2. Can make proper use of knife and fork.

Intermediate

_____ 3. Can order a meal from the menu in a family-style restaurant.

_____ 4. Can fix two or three simple dinners for one.

_____ 5. Can plan and carry out a grocery shopping trip.

_____ 6. Shows some understanding of nutrition and economy in food purchasing.

Adequate

_____ 7. Stores perishables under refrigeration.

_____ 8. Recognizes signs of spoilage in food.

_____ 9. Can follow the instructions on packaged food recipe.

_____ 10. Can use acceptable table manners.

Exceptional

_____ 11. Can follow recipes from a cookbook.

_____ 12. Can plan weekly menu and shop within food budget.

_____ 13. Can prepare balanced, nutritious meals; is a "good cook".

_____ 14. Can plan and prepare a meal for self and guests.

_____ 15. Takes advantage of specials, seasonal produce, coupons, farmers' markets, etc.

CATEGORY: PERSONAL APPEARANCE, HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Minimal

_____ 1. Can dress self (including underwear, socks, and tied shoes) in reasonably acceptable fashion.

Intermediate

_____ 2. Knows how to use soap, shampoo, deodorant, shave cream and other common personal products appropriate to sex.

Adequate

_____ 3. Showers or bathes regularly.

_____ 4. Brushes teeth regularly.

_____ 5. Keeps hair clean.

_____ 6. Dresses in reasonably clean clothing.

_____ 7. Can open a childproof container.

_____ 8. Can recognize and describe symptoms of colds, flu and other common health problems.

_____ 9. Knows how to get emergency health care.

_____ 10. Can take own temperature using an oral thermometer.

_____ 11. Can nurse self through cold or flu.

_____ 12. Recognizes and makes correct use of "over-the-counter" drugs for pain, stomach upset, diarrhea, fever, cold/allergy symptoms.

_____ 13. Can call a doctor or dentist and schedule an appointment.

_____ 14. Can read and follow directions on prescription.

Exceptional

_____ 15. Is conscious of diet, exercise, good habits and other preventive health measures.

CATEGORY: HOUSEKEEPING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Minimal

_____ 1. Can wash dishes adequately using soap and hot water.

_____ 2. Can use stove safely.

Intermediate

_____ 3. Can use small electrical appliances (toaster, hair dryer, mixer, etc.)

_____ 4. Knows what to do, who to call, if he/she smells a gas leak. (Knows how to relight pilot, if gas stove available.)

_____ 5. Can sort and wash clothes at a Laundromat. (Sorts, selects water temperature, judges load size, adds soap, uses correct change, etc.)

_____ 6. Can dry clothes in a dryer.

_____ 7. Knows how to dispose of garbage.

Adequate

_____ 8. Can change a fuse or reset circuit breakers, knows when to do so.

_____ 9. Is able to retain house key, locks doors appropriately to maintain security.

_____ 10. Can mop a floor, clean countertops, clean kitchen and bathroom using appropriate products.

_____ 11. Can defrost refrigerator, if necessary.

_____ 12. Can unclog a sink or toilet.

_____ 13. Knows what repairs a landlord should perform.

Exceptional

_____ 14. Is able to perform routine housecleaning to maintain environment in reasonably clean state.

_____ 15. Can do basic ironing, knows how to maintain permanent press.

_____ 16. Can sew on a button and do minor clothing repairs.

_____ 17. Uses drawers and closets appropriately for storage.

_____ 18. Can do minor house hold repairs.

CATEGORY: HOUSING

Minimal

_____ 1. Understands the concept of renting and knows what the role of a landlord is.

Intermediate

_____ 2. Can read Want-Ads for vacancies.

_____ 3. Understands basic terms (lease, sub-let, utilities, studio, efficiency, security, references).

Adequate

_____ 4. Understands legal implications of a lease.

_____ 5. Can ask landlord about and inspect apartment to determine if utilities are included, stove, electricity and plumbing are operatable, basic needs for space and storage are met, laundry facilities are available, total cost is realistic.

_____ 6. Shows some concern for the rights of other residents with regard to property, noise, parties, etc.

_____ 7. Understands implications of security deposits.

Exceptional

_____ 8. Has the ability to "get along" well with landlord and other tenants.

CATEGORY: TRANSPORTATION

Minimal

_____ 1. Can make a solitary trip on a public transportation between two designated points (school or work to home, etc.)

Intermediate

_____ 2. Knows how to call a taxi; can provide information needed, can pay and tip driver.

_____ 3. If given instructions, can make public transportation journey involving several transfers.

Adequate

_____ 4. Knows how to travel between cities by bus or train. (Can check schedule, knows where to purchase ticket, get to depot, etc.)

_____ 5. Can obtain and use information on public transportation routes to get to any location on the public transportation system.

Exceptional

_____ 6. Can read a map.

_____ 7. Has a driver's license.

CATEGORY: EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Minimal

_____ 1. Has a realistic view of his/her chances for completing high school degree and/or seeking higher education.

Intermediate

_____ 2. If high school graduation s not realistic, understands what a G.E.D. is and how to obtain it.

Adequate

_____ 3. Can fill out forms to enroll in an educational program.

_____ 4. Has a general idea of what job he/she wants and has an appropriate educational plan to reach this goal.

_____ 5. Understands future prospects and probable living standards relative to specific levels of education and/or specialized skills.

Exceptional

_____ 6. "Shops around" to find the best educational resources.

CATEGORY: JOB SEEKING SKILLS

Minimal

_____ 1. Has a reasonable idea of what types of jobs will be available to him/her.

Intermediate

_____ 2. Can fill out a standard job application form.

_____ 3. Can read the Want-Ads and find appropriate leads.

Adequate

_____ 4. Prepares for and participates in a job interview (dresses correctly, arrives on time, maintains proper balance of reserve and openness, doesn't smoke, answers questions accurately and appropriately).

Exceptional

_____ 6. Can write a resume.

_____ 7. Follows up interview with a letter.

_____ 8. Is able to maturely weigh the advantages of one job over another (hours, location, convenience, salary, benefits, opportunities for advancement, status, social contacts, opportunities for training, job security).

_____ 9. Understands legal discrimination (i.e. work laws) and illegal discrimination (i.e. racial) and where to seek help if discriminated against illegally.

CATEGORY: EMERGENCY SKILLS

Minimal

_____ 1. Knows functions of police, ambulance and fire department. Can reach them by calling operator.

_____ 2. Is trained to evacuate residence in case of fire.

Intermediate

_____ 3. Can access police, fire and ambulance through emergency numbers.

_____ 4. Understands basic fire prevention. (No smoking in bed, using gas stove for heat, excessive use of extension cords, frayed electrical cords, etc.)

Adequate

_____ 5. Understands "household" first aid (minor cuts and burns.)

_____ 6. Can usually determine when professional medial help is required.

Exceptional

_____ 7. Has first aid, CPR training.

CATEGORY: RESPONSIBLE DRUG USE

Intermediate

_____ 1. Shows some understanding of the risks of drug and alcohol use.

Adequate

_____ 2. "Handles" drug or alcohol use with discretion.

_____ 3. Has knowledge of physical and legal consequences of their usage.

Exceptional

_____ 4. Engages in minimal or no drug or alcohol use.

CATEGORY: SEXUALITY

Minimal

_____ 1. Understands parts of the body and sexual functioning (knows "the facts of life").

_____ 2. Has knowledge of sexual functions of opposite sex.

Intermediate

_____ 3. Understands the risks of pregnancy, V.D. and sexually transmitted diseases.

Adequate

_____ 4. Understands methods of disease prevention and birth control.

Exceptional

_____ 5. Takes a stable, responsible approach toward sexuality and intimate relationships.

CATEGORY: LEGAL ISSUES

Minimal

_____ 1. Would have the phone number of someone to call if arrested.

_____ 2. Understands generally what actions are against the law and what the consequences are. (Example: stealing is against the law and you can go to jail if you're caught.")

Intermediate

_____ 3. Knows "rights of arrest".

_____ 4. Knows what the function of a lawyer is.

_____ 5. Aware of availability of free legal services.

_____ 6. Understands the consequences of signing a contract.

Exceptional

_____ 7. Shows good "citizenship" and an understanding of the rights of responsibilities of a citizen.

CATEGORY: INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Minimal

_____ 1. Can respond to introductions and answer simple questions.

Intermediate

_____ 2. Looks others "in the eye" and shakes hands if other person offers.

_____ 3. Can make "small talk" (face to face.)

_____ 4. Can make introductions, including approaching others to introduce self.

Adequate

_____ 5. Accepts invitations from others to be involved in social activities.

_____ 6. Knows where to get help if unable to resolve interpersonal conflicts alone.

_____ 7. Has some ability to resolve conflicts with others.

_____ 8. Refrains from physical violence as a means of solving interpersonal conflict.

Exceptional

_____ 9. Labels and expresses anger or other strong feelings appropriately, "talks out" problems rather than "acting them out".

_____ 10. Makes arrangements with peers for social activities.

CATEGORY: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Minimal

_____ 1. Knows address, telephone of prime worker (social services person most involved in his/her life).

Intermediate

_____ 2. Is aware of most common social services resources (ex. welfare, food stamps, mental health resources).

Adequate

_____ 3. Knows who to contact if lost, frightened, depressed, anxious, sick, injured, out of food and money, utilities disconnected, or heat goes out.

Exceptional

_____ 4. Has awareness of "specialized" resources: mental health counseling, consumer counseling, VD clinics, student aid offices, tenant groups, animal control, public recreation, etc.

APPENDIX B

CALENDAR PLAN

APPENDIX B

Calendar Plan:

WEEK 1:

Session 1 Supervised Independent Living Program
Main Focus: Describe SILP and discuss questions and concerns regarding the program.
Life Skills Training Program discussed.
Overall agenda given to clients.
Life Skills Inventory given to participants as the pre-test.

Session 2 Job Readiness Training
Main Focus: Job Seeking/Interview Preparation
Posed the questions:
Why is it important to work?
Why do you want to work?
Both questions pointed towards motivation for getting employment.
Life Skills: ie, filling out job applications etc.
Discuss how to interview
Went into pairs to have one person be the interviewer and one the applicant. Had the pair think of questions that an employer may ask a person seeking employment.
Re-group - go over feelings
How did it feel to be the employer?
How did it feel to be the person seeking a job?
Expectations for next session:
Experience three interview like discussions and write down what they thought were the strengths and weaknesses during the "interview".

Week 2:

Session 3
Main Focus: Community Resources/ Money Management

1. Follow up on resources in the community that the youth visited. Group discussions about fear of going to new places, and how those that succeeded were able to do it.
2. Monthly Budgeting/Banking. All participants will be encouraged to open a bank account. Instruction in monthly budgeting will be given. Two different budgeting exercises will be used. The first will be if the youth are in the SILP. Those youth in the program have their rent, utilities and food paid for. The second budget will be based on if the youth were independent and not in the Supervised Independent Living Program. The youth will make up a sample budget that will include paying for the rent, utilities, food and spending money. The purpose is two-fold. The youth will see the advantage of staying in the system and being admitted to the SILP. The second reason to do two budgets is that it shows the youth how expensive it can be to live independently, and to stress how important it is to open a bank account and begin to save their money.

Expectation: All participants in the life skills program will open a savings account at a local bank. Those that don't come up with a plan to save money for the future.

Session 4
Main Focus: Self Esteem/Sexuality
Guest Speaker: Mr. Daryl Gator from Western New York United Against Drugs. He spoke on self esteem, treating people with respect and sexuality in regards to pregnancy and birth control.

Week 3:
Session 5
Main Focus: Interviews/Job Keeping Skills
1. Group discussions around the youths' experiences with the interview with prospective employers.
2. "Interview Hints"
   -what to wear
   -be prompt
   -appropriate answers to employer questions
   -what not to say
3. Guest: Director of Personnel
   Gateway Youth and Family Services Director of Personnel did 5-10 minute mock interviews with each participant. Following the interviews our guest discussed strengths/weaknesses of the interviews in a group setting.
   Question/Answer Period
4. Group Discussion on Employer Expectations (List on a Flip Chart) Rank in order of importance.
   "Take this Job and Keep it" (Video) and worksheet
5. Guest: Supervisor of Caseworkers in the Foster Care Program
   Main Topic: How do employees keep their job?
   How do supervisors evaluate who is doing a good job?
   Question/Answer Period.

Session 6 Knowledge of Community Resources
Field trip to the NYS Dept. of Labor and Neighborhood Legal Services
All participants will be given a tour and entered the computer system that matches employees and employers who have positions available. The youth stated five areas that they would like to work around. The participants can then return and see if there are new positions available. The Labor Dept. is located in the inner city. To utilize this service the youth will needed to access public transportation and will eventually be more at ease with the inner city. Upon returning the group went to the Neighborhood Legal Services.
Expectations for following week: The participants went to three community resources and brought back pamphlets or proof that they were there.
Males - The young men will have a guest speaker Mr. Daryl Gator from Western New York United Against Drugs. He will speak on self esteem, treating people with respect, and sexuality.

WEEK 4:

Session 7

Main Focus: AIDS Awareness/Sexuality

Guest Speaker: From the Western New York AIDS Community Services

Questionnaire from the presentation on what was presented and participants view of their sexuality and how much of a risk they are to obtaining the HIV virus.

Session 8

Main Focus: Apartment Management/Time Management

Section 1 - Apartment Management

Skills Session around areas of food preparation, consumer awareness and housekeeping.

Section 2 - Time Management

Exercise in scheduling, ie: in work, counseling, school, life skills training class, fun. The exercise showed the difficulty in fitting everything in in a week.

WEEK 5:

Session 9

Main Focus: Educational Planning

Guest Speaker: Erie Community College IL Program Coordinator - Colleen Hannen

This program singles out at risk youth like foster care young adults. It employs the youth in on-campus jobs that fit around their college schedules. Counseling and transportation funding is included with this program. General discussion around educational goals ensued.

Session 10

Main Focus:

-Revisited the Job Readiness Section/Check on new community resources

-Revisited the participants search for employment. General discussion on looking for a job. Working through the rejection of not finding employment.

-Went over the new community resources that the participants have gone to while looking for employment.

-Take Life Skills Inventory as a post test